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ABSTRACT

Within a total quality teaching framework, this paper uses the results of observations of college teachers' classroom practices to develop a list of effective practices for undergraduate education of adult learners. The observations that were the basis for the practices listed here were part of a study of the teaching practices of 50 full-time and adjunct college faculty who taught evening courses to working adults during six 12-week terms in 1993-94 at Wayland Baptist University-Lubbock Center (Texas). These effective practices were observed and applied to a checklist of outcome-based standards developed by the Texas Consortium of State Organizations for Teacher Education. The findings are grouped and listed under nine categories: knowledge base, curriculum integration of practice and knowledge, instructor planning, instructional delivery, critical thinking and problem solving, student diversity, motivation, assessment strategies, and communication techniques. (JB)

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TOTAL QUALITY TEACHING
MICROANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

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TOTAL QUALITY TEACHING: A MICROANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

"Very knowledgeable of subject."
"Simulations interesting and fun."
"Great discussions in class."
"I feel the instructor appreciates my work."
"Give this instructor a raise."
"I never had a class I dreaded so much."
"Spent too much time reading out of the book."
"Instructor interacted little with class."
"Did not allow for differences in student skills."
"I will avoid this instructor again at all costs."

INTRODUCTION

The above comments are actual student evaluations of instructors. What accounts for the different feelings about instructors? Why do some instructors receive accolades, while others do not? This paper will review some of the latest principles of quality performance, and present effective teaching practices observed by the writer during evaluations of 50 faculty members in an occupationally oriented bachelor's degree program at Wayland Baptist University-Lubbock Center in Lubbock, Texas. Comments to enhance quality teaching are also provided.

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

Organizations of all types have made "quality" the theme of their operations. Although there are many definitions of quality, it is measured best by a satisfied customer (Gibson, Ivancevich, and Donnelly, 1994). Students are our customers. W. Edwards Deming, the author of many of the principles of Total Quality Management, felt that managers are responsible for their organizations' success and, likewise, are accountable for organizations' failures (Deming, 1986). Teachers are managers of learning, so they are responsible for student success and satisfaction in the classroom. They must provide "customer-focused" quality leadership in the classroom. This concept embodies the following principles: embracing the values of quality and customer satisfaction; listening to the customer; believing in the customer; involving the customer in setting goals and solving problems; seeing that education is a continuous process; building teamwork; and believing in continuous improvement (Gibson, Ivancevich, and Donnelly, 1994).

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

New criteria from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools mandates assessing the effectiveness of instruction through testing knowledge in academics and major areas of study, capstone courses, exit interviews with students, and employment follow-ups. This is not new to vocational education, since we have been managing programs by objectives for many years. Effectiveness is measured on the basis of classroom tasks/objectives, and how our students interact with their instructors, fellow students, other employees, and organizations and customers in the community. Criteria for measuring effectiveness include production, quality, efficiency, flexibility, satisfaction, competitiveness, and personal growth and development. Administrator evaluations of

instructional effectiveness is concerned with how students interact with their instructors and their fellow students, as well as the quality, efficiency and flexibility of instruction. The result of quality is a satisfied student and administrator.

TOTAL QUALITY TEACHING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

The above concepts of quality can be related to effective teaching practices. The author observed the effective practices of 50 full-time and adjunct faculty who taught evening courses to working adults, average age 36, during 6 twelve-week terms in 1993-94. These effective practices were observed and applied, for organization purposes, to a checklist of outcome-based standards developed by the Texas Consortium of State Organizations for Teacher Education (Commission on Standards for the Teaching Professions, 1992). The results are shown below.

A. **Knowledge Base**. The instructors:

1. bring a wealth of knowledge and a "real world" perspective to the classroom;
2. have years of experience with "knowing and growing" with the subject content;
3. are confident and relaxed in the classroom;
4. have an extraordinary interest in the subject content; and
5. continue to learn and improve.

Comment: There is no substitute for in-depth knowledge of the subject matter. This, coupled with instructor experience and the knowledge, experience and attitudes of students, create a powerful learning environment.

B. **Curriculum Integration** (Practice with Knowledge). The instructors:

1. use personal history, area lore, and stories to add interest to the classes;
2. involve the vast community resources in instructional activities;
3. form teaching partnerships with students to integrate theory and practice; and
4. involve other faculty members in helping students.

Comment: The most effective instruction occurs when students can tie course work to their professional world of work. Assist students to relate what the employer expects, and place course work in the context of their professional activities.

C. **Instructor Planning.** The instructors:

1. involve students in developing course objectives;
2. teach from carefully planned course outlines and plans of action;
3. incorporate the textbook information, along with a variety of other directly related resources, into course instruction;
3. design quality instruction in the course plan; and
4. plan cognitive and affective learning activities to empower students to increase their learning effectiveness in the work place.

Comment: State clearly in the course syllabus the course objectives, and how a grade will be determined. Have a well thought-out plan. Never change objectives late in the course.

D. **Instructional Delivery**. The instructors:

1. use guides and work sheets to effectively guide learning;
2. use models of teaching, including partnerships in learning, role playing, inquiry, adapting to learners, presentations, and every teaching technique and technology available;
3. vary their teaching methods to appeal to different learning styles;
4. present information logically by reviewing the previous lesson, listing class objectives, presenting information, emphasizing key points, and summarizing content, and;
5. use a combination of criterion-referenced and norm-referenced approaches to evaluation.

Comment: Educational programs exist for students. Meet the students where they are, and guide them in accomplishing the objectives of the program. Break down barriers that prevent students from succeeding. Instructors are managers of learning.

E. **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.** The instructors:

1. use questioning techniques and provide confirmation to answers;
2. provide opportunities for students to "learn by doing";
3. guide students in obtaining a consensus in problem solving activities;
4. use computer technology and multi-media in learning activities;
5. orchestrate discussion so that critical issues are maximized and unrelated issues minimized;
6. departmentalize group projects on basis of student needs; and
7. carefully word questions to take students deeper into the meaning of subject content.

Comment: Expect students to grow and develop in your courses. Both instructors and students gain more when the expectations are high, and students are immersed in problem-solving activities.

F. **Student Diversity.** The instructors:

1. effectively manage conflicting views;
2. are sensitive to the rights and needs of students with disabilities; and
3. on controversial issues, allow each their own view without penalty.

Comment: Students bring different ideas and talents in the classroom. Dealing with diversity need not cause anxiety. Rather, it is an opportunity for the instructor and students to strengthen their work relationships with those with diverse views, values, knowledge and skills.

G. **Motivation.** The Instructors:

1. are enthusiastic about their instruction, and show great pleasure in teaching;
2. have outstanding rapport with students;
3. give accolades for work completed;
4. know and call students by their first names, and
5. show joy in teaching.

Comment: Incoming students fear the unknown. Use motivation techniques for student growth, as well as retention. Give personal attention to each student.

H. **Assessment Strategies.** The Instructors:

1. give pre-tests to assess levels of knowledge and/or writing abilities;
2. give progress reports early in the course;
3. ask for student input for strengthening the course; and
4. are rigid, but fair, in grading.

Comment: Provide a profile of student expectations in the course syllabus. Give students plenty of feedback on course progress.

I. **Communication Techniques.** The instructors:

1. use the chalkboard to illustrate and emphasize key points;
2. praise students for good work and correct answers;
3. use "down to earth" language to assist in learning;
4. use humor to break the monotony of class sessions;
5. use non-verbal communication, such as clapping hands and walking among students, for special instructional emphasis; and
6. "act out" instruction to illustrate key points and bring to life characters and stories.

Comment: The most long-lasting impression you make with a student may be a few words of encouragement before or after class. Touch lives on a personal level by communicating with students "face-to-face, mind-to-mind, and heart-to-heart."

SUMMARY

Quality in the classroom is measured by a satisfied student. In fact, **quality teaching exceeds the expectations of students.** The following effective practices observed by this writer will guarantee a satisfied customer.

1. Know, and have a passionate interest in, the subject matter.
2. Have a plan of teaching excellence at the beginning of the subject.
3. Involve students in designing an instructional system where everyone succeeds.
4. Guide students in accomplishing course objectives.
5. Expect students to grow and develop in your class. Immerse them in realistic problem-solving activities.
6. Touch lives on a personal level.
7. Give plenty of feedback on progress.
8. Tie instruction to the world of work.
9. Use every communication technique and technology available for teaching and learning.
10. Be a "balcony" person.
11. Keep improving.

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